

TRIBUTE TO STAFF SERGEANT
DENNIS J. HANSEN

(Mr. JORDAN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of one of America's fallen heroes, Army Staff Sergeant Dennis J. Hansen of Scottsville, New York, and formerly of Indian Lake, Ohio.

Born in Salt Lake City, Staff Sergeant Hansen was stationed at Fort Drum, New York, and assigned to the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division. He spent more than 8 years in the Marine Corps before joining the Army.

During his military career, Dennis served deployments in Africa, Kosovo, Japan, Panama, Cuba, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Mediterranean.

He died on December 7, 2009, as a result of injuries sustained while serving his country in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Dennis, age 31, is survived by his loving family, including his wife, Jennifer; their children; and his parents, Dwight and Bonnie.

In reading of Dennis's life and speaking with his family members, it was clear he had a positive impact on the lives of everyone around him. He was a leader, a family man, an accomplished wrestler in his youth, and a champion in every sense of the word. He bravely stood up and volunteered to serve. He gave his life in defense of his family, his community, his State, and his Nation. For this we owe him and his family a great debt of gratitude.

Dennis will be missed each and every day. But the strength of his character and the courage he demonstrated through his service will live on.

□ 1915

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE
ROBERT WEXLER

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, today ends the first year of the 111th Congress, a Congress that's done much to try to preserve this country's economic security, improve its place among the nations of the world, worked against the global warming problems we have, and protect our planet.

So much of what we've accomplished has been a group effort, and one of the people that's been a part of that group is Congressman ROBERT WEXLER of Florida. I was privileged to sit next to Congressman WEXLER in the Judiciary Committee. Congressman WEXLER served 13 years in this House, and today he cast his last vote and walked off this floor.

I watched him as he walked off. I was sad to see him leave because he was an outstanding Member of Congress like so many people are here who are dedicated to making this country better,

working hard, speaking his opinion to try to make this country a better place. I'm proud to have served in this Congress and to have served with ROBERT WEXLER. I'm proud to be a Member of this Congress, and I want to say to ROBERT WEXLER, you've been an outstanding Congressman, and this Congress will miss you.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL
DEBT

(Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, the Democrat majority voted today to raise our national debt limit by \$290 billion. That vote we took today to raise the debt limit, rollcall vote 988, served as a terrible reminder of all of the votes we didn't take. The debt limit increase vote is the direct opposite of the votes we should have cast earlier this year—the votes to curb spending, the votes to cut pork, the votes for real economic stimulus, the votes for meaningful fiscal discipline.

Today our national debt is \$12.13 trillion. More exactly, it is \$12,134,970,556,795.04. Since January 6, 2009, the start of this 111th Congress, the national debt has increased by \$1.4 trillion. I am sadly familiar with these numbers because I began to place the amount of the national debt in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on a daily basis since last month as a reminder to all of us. We need to stop this borrowing and spending. I urge all of my colleagues to embrace fiscal discipline.

JOBS ARE BEING CREATED IN OUR
COMMUNITIES

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to indicate that jobs are being created in our communities. And if anyone thinks that the loss of 109,000 jobs in my community in Harris County has not hurt families during this season, then they need to be aware of the necessity of the various people who need work.

I'm very proud that in the Defense bill that was passed, we have created jobs. We have created a number of jobs, and those jobs have been the kind of jobs that will serve the entire community: solar jobs, \$800,000; technology jobs, \$1 million; Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Center for the Riverside General Hospital that will help our local soldiers, that is \$1 million.

All total, \$4.8 million have been secured by the 18th Congressional District to provide jobs in Houston to ensure minority research or research on health issues, to ensure green technology jobs, to put people to work.

Mr. Speaker, this is the beginning of a great day when we provide jobs for the 18th Congressional District and all

of America. Merry Christmas to my constituents, as I've said, and Merry Christmas to our first family and all that they have done for America.

WHO DAT!

(Mr. CAO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CAO. Mr. Speaker, the New Orleans Saints are having an historic season. Their success has provided our city so much hope that I wanted to give constituents a chance to honor them.

Today's statement is from Michael DesJardins of New Orleans. Michael writes:

"I believe! Finally. It's been 40 or so years of hope and disappointment—much more disappointment. As I bask in the glow of another victory by the Saints, I have finally let my heart believe that this could be the year. They have the spirit, the talent and the determination. They seem to like and support one another. Their success is not a product of stardom but of common effort by the whole team. They have transformed the Saints into a powerful organization that lifts up the whole community. We can all learn from them.

"Long-suffering, leading to hope, only to be dashed by the heartbreak of defeat and disappointment. This story of the Saints' past could be the story of our city government.

"Our Sainted team has been transformed into a constellation of bright shining stars. Dare we believe that New Orleans can share in that transformation?"

Thank you, and I yield back. Who Dat!

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GARAMENDI). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CREDIT IS FROZEN IN THIS
COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the job market is bleak. A major reason is that bank credit is frozen in this country still. Business can't get loans to hire and function. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation reports that lending has declined for the last five consecutive quarters.